

Further Question About *Melad*

- A Discussion of Melad and Bid'ah
- Some Wrongs of the Contemporary Melad Gatherings
- The Belief that the Prophet Comes to the Melad Meeting
- The Importance of Durood and Salaam

Q.) I was brought up in a *Barelwi* tradition. Since I have begun seeking knowledge from the wider Muslim (i.e. not just *Barelwis*, but excluding *Shia*'s and similar groups, though including *Wahhabis* and *Salafis*) community, I can say that I have gained much. I now understand more and more of what the common ground is between groups and focus less on the disagreements. I think this kind of tolerance comes with knowledge. Just as your article, "Humility in Knowledge and Arrogance in Ignorance" would say.

I can say that I have changed certain beliefs that I had before my "quest for knowledge." I have benefited enormously from *Deoband* educated imams here - as a very famous Middle Eastern *Sheikh* said "*Deobandis* know their *fiqh*."

There is one issue though that remains an anomaly and that really leaves me wondering. That is concerning the *Maulid* (or as they would say in the Indian subcontinent, *Melad*). Granted, there are some things that *Barelwis* may do which are curious, but from all that I have seen around the world the *Maulid* seems to be an accepted practice among Sunni Muslims. Scholars like Jalaluddin Suyuti, Ibn Hajar Asqalani and even Ibn Taimiya described it as a praiseworthy innovation.

From the Ottoman Turks, to the pre-*Salafi* Arabs, the Malay Archipelago, the Persian and Indo-Pak region, the *Maulid* was not controversial or questionable in any way. The Sudanese uprising against the colonial forces was fueled by the emotion of the *Maulid* (verhandeligen). This is why the colonial forces tried to quell the celebration of *Maulid* in order to subdue the masses.

Today the Turks (*Hanafi*) still celebrate it with fervor, the Malay (*Shafi'i*), the Bosnians (*Hanafi*), some (non-*Salafi*) Arabs, the *Barelwis*, the *Sudanese*. In fact, the only people who don't celebrate it seem to be the *Salafis*, *Deobandis* and the Tabligh Jamaat (the *Shariah* base of which is of course the books and texts of the *Deobandi* school).

This is curious. If imams like as-Suyuti have permitted it (if it is free of blameworthiness), was he in error? Was Asqalani in error? The establishment of a day to celebrate the Maulid is completely regarded as *bid'ah* by Mufti Usmani, praiseworthy or blameworthy acts aside.

A.) As I explained in my article on celebration of Eid-e-Melad-un-Nabi, holding a meeting to discuss different aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a very meritorious act for which the Muslims should strive to the best of their ability. But confining this discussion to the events of the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and restricting it to a particular date and holding attendance at such meetings as necessary or obligatory for every Muslim renders this practice as *bid'ah* or innovation. Mostly the meetings of Maulid today are of this type. Therefore, contemporary *Ulema* of Deoband have declared it a *bid'ah*.

If the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is made subject of a meeting, and the meeting is free of the above mentioned defects, nobody can call it a *bid'ah*. It is in this context that some scholars of the past have allowed the practice.

Answer by: Mufti Taqi Usmani

A Discussion of Melad and Bid'ah

[Note: Although the question does not address the issue of Melad from a fiqh point of view, but only from a historical point of view, yet it is also important to examine the issue in that context. For the most important question for a Muslim has to be whether or not a particular act is permissible according to the Shariah, which is derived from Qur'an, Sunnah, and the practice of the Sahabah, as they understood the Sunnah. The following provides that perspective.]

The establishment of ceremonial gatherings under the banner of "Eid-Melad-un-Nabee" and attaching religious significance to them is purely *bid'ah* and an innovation in *Deen*, because neither did Rasulullah ﷺ himself indulge in it, nor did the illustrious Khulafaa-e-Raashideen, Radi-Allahu anhum, organize such functions. Similarly, neither did any of the other Sahaaba-e-Kiraam, Radi-Allahu anhum, participate in such gatherings, nor is there any incident on record during the blessed era of the taabi'een or tab'e taabi'een (Rahmat-u-Allahi alayhim) that can, in any way, substantiate this innovation. These people were best acquainted with the Sunnah of Rasulullah ﷺ and had total love for him. They were staunch followers of the Shariah.

Rasulullah ﷺ has in no unclear terms, said: "Whoever introduces anything that is not part of Deen, into this Deen of ours, it shall be rejected." (Bukhari/Muslim)

In another Hadith he says: "Hold fast onto my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Khulafa, after me. Hold fast onto it firmly, and beware of newly-introduced practices, for every new practice is an innovation and every innovation leads one astray." (Abu Dawood/Tirmizi)

Severe warnings have been sounded in the above-mentioned Ahadith with regard to introducing and implementing innovations in Deen. The holy Qur'an enjoins: "And whatsoever the messenger giveth you, take it. And whatsoever he forbiddeth, abstain (from it). And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is stern in reprisal." [Al-Hashr 59:7]

"Verily in the messenger of Allah, ye have a good example for him who looks unto Allah and the last day, and remembers Allah much." [Al-Ahzab 33:21]

"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed my favor unto you, and have chosen for you a religion, al-Islam." [Al-Maidah 5:3]

There are numerous other Ayat and Ahadith that can be quoted. But from no Ayat or Ahadith can the current form of "Eid-e-Melad-un-Nabee ﷺ" be proved.

Will such innovations grant proximity to Allah Taala? On the contrary, these innovations should be a cause of great concern and alarm for the Ummat-e-Muslimah!

It is a known fact that Rasulullah ﷺ is the most superior of all the Ambiyaa alaihimus-salaam and also that he is the seal of all the prophets alayhimus-salaam. He left no stone unturned in conveying Deen to us and rendering precious advice to us. If the "Eid-e-Melad-un-Nabee ﷺ" was a divinely inspired act, then surely Rasulullah ﷺ would have commanded the Muslims to it, or at least, either he or his beloved Sahabah, Radi-Allahu anhum, would have practiced it.

That is why, in the light of these unambiguous proofs, the Ulama-e-Haqq have always refuted and rejected the customary form of "Eid-e-Melad-un-Nabee ﷺ" and Mahfeel-e-Melad and have also always discouraged people from participating in such gatherings.

Some Wrongs of the Contemporary Melad Gatherings

The contemporary form of Eid-e-Melad-un-Nabee ﷺ apart from being a manifestation of *Bid'ah*, also encompasses other evils such as the intermingling of sexes, usage of musical instruments and many other such evils. The most abhorring and shocking evils in these functions are the acts of shirk that take place. With hollow claims of "Hubbe-Rasul ﷺ" (love for Rasulullah ﷺ) entreaties and supplications are made to beings other than Allah, namely to Ambiyaa alaihimus-salaam and Auliaa-e-Kiraam Rahmat-u-Allahi-alaaahim.

The Belief that the Prophet Comes to the Melad Meeting

Some people also believe that Rasulullah ﷺ comes to this function and due to this belief, they stand up in respect and veneration. This is absolutely untrue. Rasulullah ﷺ does not arrive at any "Eid-e-Melad-un-Nabee ﷺ" function. He is in his Rawdha-e-Mubarak (grave) at Madinah

Munawwarah and will emerge from it at the onset of Yawmul-Qiyaamah, or the Day of Judgement.

The following Ayat and Hadith testify to this fact: The Qur'an, addressing Rasulallah ﷺ announces explicitly: - "Lo! Thou wilt die, and Lo! They will die. Then Lo! On the day of resurrection, before your sustainer, you will dispute." [Az-Zumar 39:30-31]

At another place, Rasulallah ﷺ is addressed together with the rest of mankind: - "Then Lo! After that you surely die, then Lo! On the day of resurrection you are raised (again)" [Al-Muminun 23:16]

Rasulallah ﷺ himself has said in a Hadith: - "My grave will be the first to be opened on the day of Qiyamah and I shall be the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession shall be accepted."

These Ayat and Hadith as well (and there are others) prove that all of mankind will be raised from their graves on the day of Qiyamah, with Rasulallah ﷺ being no exception. On this, there is consensus of the entire Ummah.

The Importance of Durood and Salaam

Instead of squandering our money and time on futile acts of *Bid'ah* let us rather utilize our precious time, as much as possible in the recitation of Durood and salaam upon our beloved Rasulallah ﷺ which is indeed, a highly meritorious and virtuous act. The Qur'an enjoins: - "Lo! Allah and his Angels shower blessings on the Nabee 'O' ye who believe ask for the descent of blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation." [Al-Ahzab 33:56]

Rasulallah ﷺ has said: "Whosoever sends one Durood upon me, Allah Taala will shower ten mercies upon him." (Muslim). Particularly on Jumuah, one should increase the recitation of Durood and salaam.

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